

Contributions

Christian Giving

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I cannot emphasize too emphatically the importance of this subject, and I feel my weakness and inability to handle this subject alone, but I trust that the Holy Spirit may bless my weak efforts in the advancement of Christ's kingdom. I said *advancement*. I'll emphasize that word *ADVANCEMENT*. What does it mean? The act of advancing, or moving forward, progress.

Now, that is exactly what we want to do. We don't want to stand still. In fact, we can't stand still, we must either go forward or backward. Backward is not the name of our church. We are "Progressive" Brethren.

Now, in order to progress as God would have us, we must, first, have the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Second, if he is there, we will have an earnest, yea, a craving to see souls saved for Christ. If we have this desire, this craving to see souls saved, we will do all in our power to save them. What does Christ say? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16: 15.

Now it is impossible for us all, each individually, to go into all the world. However, it is possible for us all, each individually, to preach Christ and him crucified, at home in our own community, each in his or her own way, and all can help to send some one else to save those whom we cannot reach, that they may call upon the name of the Lord. Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? Romans 10: 13, 14, and a portion of verse 15. "Except they be sent." That takes money. Now we are coming down to the subject I was to write about.

I said that takes money. How will we get it? God, in his infinite wisdom, has provided for all of these things. God has provided the funds, but the trouble is we misappropriate them. Let us read, if you please, Psalm 24: 1, 2. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." "The fullness thereof." That means you, that means me, that means everything on the whole earth. Again, we will quote Psalm 50: 9, 12. "I will take no bullock out of thine house, nor he goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all of the fowls of the mountain and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof."

Let us see who the silver and the gold belong to.

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine,

saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2: 8. Now since we and all we possess belong to the Lord, why should we object to using his money in spreading his gospel? We all agree that we and all the earth are the Lord's. The New Testament dispensation did not do away with that, as some believe the commandment of tithing was done away with. For my part I cannot believe that the good Lord wants us to give, or rather return, any less of his own money, to keep his business of saving souls going, than he ever did.

I can find no place in the Bible where Christ disapproves of tithing; on the other hand in Luke 11: 42, we find Christ commending tithing, viz.: "But woe unto you, Pharisees, for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." We also find that tithing was practiced centuries before the law was written by Moses. Abraham practiced it as also did Jacob.

Surely God knew tithing was the best and surest way of raising money, or he never would have instituted the plan of tithing. If we have been released from the compulsion of tithing, would God require any the less from us who are under a dispensation of love? Surely not, for see how much more he has done for us. He sacrificed his only begotten Son, to redeem us from all sin. Then, too, we are much more enlightened than they were. We have the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, the Holy Ghost to bring all things to our remembrance, and God's word which for a small sum any one can procure.

I think our church, as a whole, has a dislike, yes, even an abhorrence for the collection system in passing around the plate. How much nicer it would be if we would have a systematic mode of giving and let that be at least a tenth. Then, as the apostle Paul says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Let us read II Timothy 3: 16, 17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

We take the above as a matter of fact; it is so, because God said so thru Paul. Since we agree on that point, let us turn to Malachi 3: 8, 9. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Let us consider seriously wherein we have robbed God. If it is really so that we are not giving a true account of our stewardship to God, if we are making a breach of trust, as it were, may God help us to see our mistakes and rectify them. Perhaps we lack proper faith, and can only see starvation staring us in the face. Perhaps satan blinds our eyes to the promises of God by saying that you will

surely fail in business, if you do anything so foolish as to give a tenth of your income. But let us look to God's promises; let us have unbounded faith in him, for his promises are sure, his word never fails.

Hearken to these words of God: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3: 10.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

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The Lord gave us a form of prayer which can teach us great lessons.

I. It is a comprehensive prayer. All of men's needs are included in its petitions in general terms. It teaches us our relation to God, "Our Father." This men did not know. Jesus first called God, "Father" in the true sense. It teaches us that God is not in any idol made with hands, as heathens think, nor the spirit of rocks, mountains, streams, clouds and oceans, as the cultivated pagans thought and as pantheists and materialists teach today, but, "Our Father, which art in heaven." It teaches us reverence, "Hallowed be thy name." It inculcates a love for a "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,"—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven." And thus we learn that this present evil world must give way to a world ruled by God.

In spite of human hate and national greed wars shall cease, strife shall die, the Prince of Peace shall reign, cut throat competition shall give place to brotherly co-operation and men shall seek God's will in all relations of life rather than their own selfish will.

It teaches us daily dependence on God for our food and raiment,— "Give us day by day our daily bread." This applies to rich or poor. We should trust God for food and raiment, provided we are doing his will, then thank him for it.

It teaches us forgiveness,— "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Thus we are shown that our relation to God will depend on our relation to our fellow men. This also teaches us the great fact of sin. No one but one who sins, need pray such a prayer.

It teaches us to depend on God for keeping as we pass thru this evil world,— "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or, "the evil One." (R. V.)

It teaches us that we can ask these things in faith since God has the power to do them,— "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever." This is true, tho earthly and often wicked kings rule the world today. Nevertheless, the kingdom is God's and he will overturn, overturn until he shall come whose right it is, to rule. The power also is his. He grants it to kings, presidents and peoples. But they who pervert this power are deprived of it. Hence,